

forth its branches even over the seas. Thus three such « Ashrams » sprang up at Vadakankulam, Manaparai and Ambihapur — in the Indian soil. Today 86 monks (6 priests and 80 lay-brothers) are serving God under the shadow of these « Ashrams ».

Can we forget those holy Rosarian Nuns who have immolated their lives *simili modo*? After three desperate failures, Fr. Thomas was finally able to lay the stone in 1948 for the Congregation of the Rosarian Sisters. However, the formal inauguration took place on the 22nd of August, 1950. They grew and spread as years went by. Today 100 of them are ministering in the steady steps of their founder. They have two « Ashrams » in Ceylon and one in India.

Will not Our Lord say to this man of God, « well done, my good and faithful servant... »? Shall we not show our appreciation to our Oblate confrere by joining hands with these Monks and Nuns to implore God that He may shower down His Blessings over this Congregation? Let their power houses be installed and flourish from coast to coast.

SELVAM, O.M.I.

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FATHER VICTOR ROHR, O.M.I.
(1873-1965)

Lest we Forget...!

Humble Lillooet Missionary V. Rohr, O.M.I., made history in 2nd World War, won hearts, saved lives by deeds of valor.

Posthumous report for history's sake.

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After his ordination at Liege, Belgium, Father Victor Rohr, O.M.I., paid a short visit to his family in Lorraine and then set out for the field of labour assigned to him — the Indian missions of British Columbia. He

reached New Westminster in September, 1898, and left almost immediately for St. Eugene Mission, among the Kootenay Indians, to begin his apprenticeship under the firm and expert guidance of the celebrated Father Nickolas Coccola, O.M.I. He learned the rudiments of missionary life so rapidly that, within six months, he was able to take up work among the Stalo Indians at St. Mary's Mission on the Fraser.

Of the young missionary, Father Morice, O.M.I., wrote. "He is an excellent recruit whose love for his country is eclipsed only by his zeal for souls. At St. Mary's Mission he began an apostolic career during which he did untold good on the Lower Fraser, among the Thompson Indians and in some Shuswap villages but especially in the Port Douglas and Lillooet missions".

Found his goal at Lillooet

In fact, although he was principal of three Indian schools (St. Mary's, Sechelt and Cariboo) and a member of the Vicarial Council, his greatest and most congenial work was done amongst the Indians and white settlers of the Lillooet and Port Douglas districts. If he is still so highly esteemed and deeply loved by these people, it is not only because of his remarkable gift for making friends but especially because of his untiring devotedness to the sick, the poor, the aged and the unfortunate.

To bring both spiritual and material comfort to them, what journeys he undertook, what risks he ran on treacherous lakes and swollen rives, what endless miles he trudged along primitive paths and over forbidding mountains!

On such journeys, his Roman collar was the only outward sign of his calling as, to protect himself against the weather, he habitually wore a short rainproof coat, lined with sheepskin in winter, heavy boots and trousers, and a broadbrimmed hat. With one hand he carried

his duffel bag while the fingers of his other hand counted off the beads of rosary after rosary.

Discipline was his weapon

Upon reaching his destination, he quickly donned his Oblate garb and set to work... Woe betide the poor Indian sacristans and janitors if « the beautiful churches of which I built 12 » and the altar linens were not clean and in perfect order.

After 40 years of devoted work and, on many occasions, of great hardship and suffering, Father Rohr met with a serious accident during which he was severely injured and almost drowned. His health was considerably impaired but, with characteristic energy, he refused to give in. However, some time later, he gladly availed himself of permission to visit his relatives in France. There, however, he was to do anything but take a well-deserved rest.

« I arrived in France shortly after the outbreak of war », he wrote to a friend, « and, because so many priests have been conscripted, was called upon to act as Parish Priest of Cirev in Lorraine. There I saw the retreat of the French troops and the arrival of the Germans. For five years we lived in fear and trembling... Although we were forbidden to do so under the pain of death, we listened to the British Broadcasting Company

War unfolds cruel adventure

« Sometimes it gave us good news... One day I was called out into the woods to see a Canadian flier who had been shot down during the night. When I came upon him he was scared but he felt right at home when I told him that I had spent the best 40 years of my life in British Columbia. He was a brave boy from Vancouver. Later I learned that he had managed to make his way through the enemy lines. He is now safe in Victoria.

« I hunted for his companions but found that the poor lads had made the supreme sacrifice... Some time later, a girl brought me a letter in English from a parachutist. I found him, a Scotchman by the name of Wilkinson, and his companions were a Spaniard, a Swiss and a Frenchman. It was heartening to see those fine brave lads in uniform. Twice I took food and tobacco to them. They disappeared and, I think, were later captured and shot...

« Every evening my parishioners gathered in the church to say the beads... After the people had consecrated themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, they carried the statue of the Blessed Mother from village to village all through Lorraine. Many walked barefoot as they prayed and sang and begged forgiveness of God. The enemy let us do that but they said mockingly: « That witch will never help you »! Six days after these processions, the radio told us that the Americans had landed and everybody began to shout:

The Yanks are coming!

« Six months later, Cirey was bombarded for eight days and the house in which we were living was hit several times. Still, I went out every morning to say Mass in the hospital and to bring Holy Communion to the nine sisters and the four families who had taken refuge in our cellar.

« On the 9th day, November 18, 1944, General Leclerc entered our town, and on the 19th and 20th, we had High Mass in our cellar followed by the singing of the Te Deum, the Magnificat and, of course, the « Marseillaise ». I asked the General if he had come to stay. He replied: « Je ne sais pas. Vous savez, les fortunes de la guerre.. » The old fox! He slipped out and, four days later surprised the enemy at Strasbourg.

Some things were pleasant

« Shortly after General Lœcleic's departure the Americans came. They filled our church and you should have seen the surprise and pleasure on their faces when, from the pulpit, I thanked and welcomed them in English. They had not suspected that the old French Priest could talk their language. At once I became one of them and we celebrated Thansksgiving Day together.

« They belonged to the famous Rainbow Division, and General Collins made me their chaplain. Many of them came to confession and to Holy Communion. As chaplain, I accompanied them to Tyrol and to Austria where we spent almost a year together ».

Appreciation and surprise

In a long article in the Rainbow Reveille, Staff Reporter PFC Francis A. Sando wrote: Father Rohr is « a mild-mannered, grey-haired man... known and loved throughout the Division as the courageous Priest who aided the French underground at Cirey... Under the very eyes of the Gestapo, he was a refuge to downed Allied fliers. He smiles as he says that the only thing in which the Gestapo was successful against him was in stealing his stamp collection — a crime for which he will never forgive them... Under his defiant orders, the French flag was ostentatiously displayed at all times in his church ».

Of this incident Father Rohr wrote: « When the German officer in command ordered me to remove the French flag from the sanctuary of my church, I got him to reverse this order by pointing out that my parishioners were giving him enough trouble as it was and that they would give him more trouble if he removed their flag. Thus it came about that we kept our flag in the church all during the occupation ».

Military honours

« It was in December, 1944, when Cirey was entered by the 42nd, that Father Rohr endeared himself

to the hearts of so many Rainbowmen, and that Division Commander, Major General Harry J. Collins, conveyed our thoughts by pinning a Rainbow on the priest's black robes to make him one of us ». (Later on, Father Rohr was made an honorary Colonel of the Division).

« I had hoped to return to the U.S.A. with the Rainbow Division », writes Father Rohr, « and then to get back to my beautiful Lillooet missions but I fell ill (high blood pressure) and had to go back to my two sisters in Sarreguemines, Lorraine... Some time later, Father Balmès, O.M.I. (God forgive him!), gave me other orders ».

In pursuance of these orders, Father Rohr is now (1949) teaching English to the future missionaries in the Oblate Seminary in Augny, France. There, last year, surrounded by many friends, including Archbishop Breynat, O.M.I., and Father J. B. Salles, O.M.I., a former missionary in British Columbia, Father Rohr celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination. His numerous Canadian friends pray that God will bless him, and that his favourite patronesses, Mary Immaculate and St. Therese of Lisieux, will aid him as he helps prepare the young men at Augny for the missions.

After teaching at Augny, Father Rohr, who speaks French, English and German fluently, was made chaplain cemetery near Verdun and then chaplain of a hospital at Dudelange, Luxemburg. Two years ago, his infirmities, including almost total blindness, forced him into retirement. Approximately two weeks ago, a severe cold developed into influenza and this caused such weakness that, when he got up and tried to walk, he broke his leg. A few days later March 13, 1965 he died.

The courage with which he toiled, overcame obstacles, and bore hardships, together with his unwavering trust in prayer, incline us to put him among those men of whom Robert W. Service wrote the lines:

« Send me men girt for the combat, men who are
grit to the core;
...men with the hearts of Vikings, and the simple
faith of a child ».

Oblate Missions, May-June, 1965

Death Takes Rev. Louis G. Bachand
Prominent O. M. I.
(1888-1965)

Rev. Louis G. Bachand, OMI, one of the bestknown members of the Oblate Fathers Order, world-wide, died yesterday afternoon at St. Joseph's hospital, an institution of which he was president.

The death of Rev. Bachand removes from the Oblate Fathers Order a man who has been a leader for most of his 50 years in the priesthood. It was on May 28 this year that he observed the 50th anniversary of his ordination and, on this occasion, a solemn high mass of thanksgiving was celebrated in St. Jean Baptiste church. Due to his health, no public observance was held but private receptions were held at St. Jean Baptiste rectory and at St. Joseph's hospital and, Fr. Bachand was able to make a plane trip to Clyde, Kansas, his home town, where he held a reunion with his brother and his sisters, two of them nuns, and was received in his home parish church the church where, some 50 years ago, he celebrated his first mass and gave his first sermon.

Fr. Bachand's ambition was to serve in the foreign missions of the Oblate Fathers, some in the Hudson Bay region of Canada, some in Ceylon, and in South